

**Environmental Restoration (ER) Project  
Cerro Grande Fire  
Accelerated Action Information Sheet**

**Potential Release Site (PRS) 18-003(g)  
Septic System**

*Technical Area (TA)-18 is located off Pajarito Road near the confluence of Pajarito Canyon and Threemile Canyon. The principal activities at TA-18 are the design, construction, research, development, and application of experiments that involve chain reactions of atoms splitting fast enough to be self-sustaining (called nuclear criticality).*

**PRS History:** PRS 18-003(g) is an active septic system that has served Building 18-1 since 1944. Previously, Building 18-1 included a photochemical laboratory that was demolished in 1968. Currently the building is used as an electronic assembly and storage area. Although the tank is not presently used as a traditional septic tank, the lines are still active, allowing sanitary waste to pass through and accumulate in the tank before exiting through the outlet lines leading to the Laboratory's Sanitary Wastewater System at TA-46. The reinforced concrete tank has an estimated capacity of 500 gallons. Initially, the septic tank drained to an outfall (presumed to be a gravel-filled trench) in Pajarito Canyon. In 1969, wastes were rerouted to the TA-18 sewage lagoons. Since 1992, wastes have been pumped to the Sanitary Wastewater System.

PRS 18-003(g) is listed on the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments module of the Laboratory's Hazardous Waste Facility permit. The ER Project has not proposed the site for no further action; there are no indications of residual risk at the site.

ER Project personnel sampled septic tank liquids and sludge and subsurface soils down gradient of the tank during a field



investigation in 1993 and 1994. In 1996, personnel conducted an interim cleanup action at PRS 18-003(f) that removed the contents of the tank, pressure-washed the tank's interior, and sampled the tank contents for waste disposal characterization.

**Issues of Concern:** The area upstream of PRS 18-003(f) burned during the Cerro Grande fire (a fire intensity rating of low to high). There is little potential for erosion or scouring because there is no drain field associated with the site. There is no debris, nor are there any structures, that could interfere with or be impacted by flood mitigation efforts.

**Accelerated Action Status:** PRS 18-003(g) is part of a voluntary corrective measures plan designed to

- Collect supplemental surface and subsurface soil samples,
- Determine the nature and extent of soil contamination (if present) from the supplemental data,
- Assess the potential human health and ecological risks, and
- Clean up the site by excavation, if necessary.

The tank at PRS 18-003(g) is an active system and is not scheduled for removal at this time.

**Related Documents:** November 2, 1995; VCM Plan, March 17, 1999